EXHIBIT 7
DATE Jan 14 2005
HB

Madam chair + fellow committee members. For the record my name is Jennifer West here in Billings. ①

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- Mom of a 9 yr old with form of autism called aspergers
- He is a success story Services began on him around age 2 & by the time he was 6, he no longer qualified
- He went from being kicked out of numerous child care facilities due to unmanageable behavior to a regular 3rd grader.

- Services provided by (2)
Early Intervention + Develop
mental Disabilities programs
have helped him to become
a participating member of
our community. Most people
who meet my son for the
first time do not realize
he has a disability - I
credit ~~the~~ DD Services
for helping to make this
happen.

(3)

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- I am also a FSS for an agency that provides services. I have some concerns about the implementation of the Mercer Rate system & MONA assessment. I urge you to look very carefully at the design and introduction of this system so our families are not negatively impacted. One

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example of my concerns is ④
how budget amendments will
be handled. I ~~have~~ checked
some of my ~~client~~ consumer files & have
many budget amendments —
one family has had 8 — not always
new money, but $ moved
from category to category. I
am very concerned that this
process may become even
more cumbersome & family
unfriendly than it is currently.
I would also like to
advocate for the 3% increase.
Agencies have not had an
increase in 3 years. ~~Families~~

Wage parody is a huge issue. (5)
Families are greatly impacted
by staff turnover which would
decrease with ↑ wages. One area
I currently serve had a new
FSS every 6 mo for 2 or 3
years. They have reported this
puts services in a standstill as
they have to develop a new
relationship, repeat needs,
in essence start all over from
square one.

In conclusion, you have the
opportunity to have a great
impact on DD services. Please
develop interim committee with
providers as members to make

the transition to the Mercer Rate (6)
system as seamless as possible &
with as little neg. impact on our
families. To help increase our
consumers quality of life by
helping to decrease employee turnover,
Please support the 3% provider
increase & wage parody.

Thank you for your time.